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The Induction Charm and the Initiation (Initiation Stream I.)

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From “The Witching Way of the Hollow Hill”

This initiation is the key to gaining the bond between the Powers and the Witch who wishes to access the workings described in this book on a deeper level.

This is the “pact” you must take with the Old Powers, from the Master-spirits, all the way to the powers of the Land, and even the spiritual guardians of plants and beasts. It is not hard to perform, but it is lasting and binding, and if any hint of insincerity is in your heart when you perform this rite, it will not work. There is no “getting out” of this oath and pact, and it should never be taken lightly.

You should do it around one of the old holy or hidden festival days of the Old Ways- especially around Hallows Eve or the Twelve Nights of Yule. But the tide of Lammas is a good time as well, underscoring the sacrifice of one way of life and the birth of a new.

It should be done at night, or at dusk, and the workings of it are simple- days before, you should have been doing various devotions, trance works, internal communions, even walking the Left-way road if you can, to communicate your intentions. You should have mastered the understandings given in this whole work; nothing written anywhere in this book should hold any sort of vagueness for you. You should have performed the “Rite of Arriving”, given later, if you can. There should really be no “if you can”- effort is always rewarded. Open yourself, go simply; be aware, be clear. The fire of love that burns in your heart for the Old ways and the Land and the Old Powers is what draws you to this pact.

You begin by making a compass round, as well and as perfectly as you can- for the Initiation, it should, if possible, have at least one implement to each direction.

You then invoke the Witch-mother and Witch-father, and, before you make the oath, you strip bare and put on new clothes. The old clothes should be clothes that you have worn often, which you will never wear again- they must be burned later. After you have changed, you pierce one of the fingers of your left hand, letting several drops of blood fall onto the bare earth. This is very important.

Then you say:

“Old One, Veiled Queen, I shed my blood for you.

An oath on the Land, an oath to life and to spirit-
Masters of the world, of fire and weaving
Of beasts and forests, fens, sky, human desires and destinies,
Powers inside the Land,
Hear an oath, sealed by blood and by blood carried into the Land:

In the name of the Pale Woman below the Hill,
Youthfully dead and ever-living, I am bound to your wisdom and power.
Great oak, birch, elder, thorn, holly, ash,
Growing creatures of green coat and root,
Spirits who guard you and carry forth your lives,
By pact and oath I am sealed to you as friend,
Brother (or sister) and pupil, guardian and receiver.

Owl, hound, wolf and fox, badger and toad and bull, goose
And raven, serpent and hare, horse, swine and stag,
Beasts of the land and air, and unseen places,
By pact and oath I am sealed to you as friend,
Brother (or sister) and pupil, guardian and receiver.

**I shed my blood for you; from my left hand I shed it,
I bind myself to the Land and your spirit.**

Support me, protect me, shelter me on the Witching way
The hidden road to Wisdom
Let your power answer to my will,
In the holy meadow, the Ring of Art, in my days and nights,
As my power will answer to your will
And rely on you.

Speak to me in vision,
Do not abandon me to the grave,
Nor hand me over to Hard Fate utterly,
Nor those whom my love protects.

Bestow on me the birth of Mastery, birth to the Deathless,
And ever your ways and will I will keep and honor.
I am named_____, singer and invoker of powers and wisdom”

Then you must immediately do the Red Meal. After that, run around the compass once clockwise, and leap out to the East. This is rebirth into your life as a Witch.

Analysis:

There are a few parts of this Induction charm that need to be examined, to understand the implications of this oath.

You begin by calling upon the Master spirits of all things, and the people inside the land- and you ask them to “Hear an oath, sealed by blood and by blood carried into the Land”- the blood you shed is literally carrying your life-force and the spiritual essence of you into the Land, to where you physically merge with these powers, and the essence of your oath goes with it. You now share blood with these powers, not just spiritual oneness. You become a blood member of their Otherworldly “house”. This is why this oath is so serious and unbreakable.

In the name of Old Fate, the “pale woman under the hill”, you then call upon all of the powers of green growing things, and beasts- and to both, you say this:

“By pact and oath I am sealed to you as friend,
Brother (or sister) and pupil, guardian and receiver.”

This is a strong contract, for you are telling the spiritual powers of all trees and plants, and all animals, that you will be their friend, their brother or sister, their pupil (willing to learn from them) but most importantly, their “Guardian” and “receiver”.

To be a Guardian of plants and animals means that you will not stand by while animals or plants or trees are needlessly or wantonly destroyed. You cannot expect their powers to respond to you, or empower you, if you call yourself their friend and guardian, but pay no attention to what becomes of them in the world around you. It means doing whatever YOU can- if you see little kids tearing up plants or flowers needlessly, gently ask them not to and encourage them to admire these things and let these beautiful things do what Nature has intended them to do. If you see people tormenting an animal, ask them why, and do what you can to stop it. Report them to the authorities if they are being cruel to animals.

Give as little money as you can to industries that are cruel to animals, and if you can, stop supporting factory farms. Give donations to environmental groups that try to save forests or preserve animal habitats. Try to find homes for homeless animals, and do not bring animals to “kill” shelters where they will be killed if not adopted within a week or two- seek out “no kill” humane shelters.

But aside from the title “Guardian”, you have also given yourself the title of “Receiver”- this means that you are in a two-way contract- as you give your effort, these animals will also give to you, and you will receive. ‘What you receive’ covers everything, from their flesh as food when you need it, all the way to their enjoyment, guidance, and company.

This is a two-way contract. You will receive the flesh and bodies of plants and animals to sustain you; spirits will guide and protect you; it is a full contract.

With your blood and words, you are binding yourself by oath and pact, blood and Fate, to the Land and to all beings within it, or on it. This is important, for this is the way of power- living creatures and plants mediate power to us everyday, and with deeper awareness, they will open up to you.

Your oath is also to the “powers inside the Land”- referring to both the ancestral stream of your own dead kin, and to the dead in general, but also to the Land-spirits, the powers of natural places. This is a “faery oath”- in the most inclusive meaning of the word- an oath which places taboos upon you. You will not knowingly pollute or fill the natural world with anything that you know will despoil it, that will destroy the Land or degrade it- you will not destroy or move nor help another to destroy or move standing stones, the remains of stone age tumuli, or other ancient monuments that are gateways into the Land, into the unseen.

You will not defile or destroy or deface burial mounds; you will not despoil graves except to take a little earth for needful things. If you take from the Land, or from any sacred place, you will take only tiny amounts and leave behind something of yourself- blood, hair, nails, offerings of ale or beer, or something valuable to you. You will not wantonly destroy natural areas, in form or function, nor encourage others to do the same, for any reason beyond saving a life. Remember these things, like you remember your oath to the powers of green growing things and beasts- because to break them may spell the end of whatever power you have received “back” in your contract.

Continuing on, you address the Powers you are making this oath to- animal spirits and plants, but chiefly to the Great Queen and the Old One or the White King, you say

“Support me, protect me, shelter me on the Witching way
The hidden road to Wisdom
Let your power answer to my will,
In the holy meadow, the Ring of Art, in my days and nights,
As my power will answer to your will
And rely on you.”

Here is where you enter into the binding part of the contract- in exchange for their support, protection, and shelter on the witching road to Wisdom, and in exchange for THEIR power answering to YOUR will, during petitions wherever you happen to be- in the Compass or just anywhere in your ‘days and nights’, you swear that YOUR power will answer to THEIR Will- and rely on them.

This is very important, because it is the balance. A day will come, perhaps many days, when their wills will command, and your power- your essential power and life as a person, will have to obey. Even your death may be their will. You agree beforehand that you will willingly join your power to their will, whatever it may be.

Your further ask them to

“Speak to me in vision,
Do not abandon me to the grave,
Nor hand me over to Hard Fate utterly,
Nor those whom my love protects.”

This is important, for dreams of them, and dreams from them, will usually start in the nights following a successful and “accepted” initiation rite. But you go further- considering Wisdom and Truth are the only “salvation” worth seeking, you ask your new patrons to never abandon you to the grave- meaning that you will rely on them to see to it that you have found the wisdom you need before you go below the Earth, to death. If they should require your death for some reason, you trust that they will not abandon you to “Hard Fate utterly”- meaning not give you up fully to the powers of death and dissolution. If you keep up YOUR end of the pact, the powers will see after you, in life or death.

And on the tail of that, you ask that this same protection be extended to “those whom my love protects”- those whom you love become protected as well. This is a great gift, and all the more reason for you to uphold your end of the pact, with no reservations. Broadly speaking, what you will “uphold” is a life of protecting the Land that you have become one with, and the creatures who dwell on it and within it- and you will uphold the values expressed in the Hidden Tradition- the belief in the sacredness of Life, and the central importance of Truth, chief among those.

This moving oath is ended with the initiate swearing him or herself to them once more, and taking a new name to be used in the Witching way- the name that spirits and beings in the unseen will know you by.